

THE CHRONOLOGICAL ACCURACY
OF THE “LOGOTHETE”
FOR THE YEARS A.D. 867–913

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MUCH useful work has been done during recent decades on the absolute chronology of the reigns of Basil I and his son Leo VI.¹ Pride of place among workers in this field must be awarded to Father V. Grumel, who has written a whole series of studies distinguished by deep learning, clear exposition, and an intuitive grasp of the subject. Especially in an article which, for its acumen and cogency of reasoning, must rank as one of the most remarkable works on this scale to be produced during the present century, he has totally revolutionized and clarified our knowledge of the absolute chronology of the reign of Leo VI.² Even so, many points still remain open to doubt or dispute. We are therefore justified in exploring one further avenue of approach to the problem, which is the hypothesis put forward and defended in the present article. It may briefly be stated thus: in writing his accounts of the reigns of Basil I, Leo VI, and Alexander, Symeon the "Logothete,"³ who was a contemporary and admirer of Romanus I, relied for this chronology on a series of *Annals*; and that, when the basic data are disinterred from his text, these constitute absolute chronological criteria from which there can be no appeal.

We must be clear at the outset on the distinction between *Annals* and *Chronicles*. The annalist merely sets down what he believes to be the most significant events of the current, or immediately past, year. In the mediaeval west, these events were often noted down on Paschal tables, that is, on blank spaces between the dates calculated for coming Easters. This method of recording cannot of course be called history, since the events are necessarily recorded in isolation, and no connected narrative can be written of any event, or series of events, which covers two or more years. On the other hand, annals have this priceless advantage, that they record events in their true chronological sequence. They neither tell nor explain a story; but they preserve, in the

¹ Adontz, Canard, Grégoire, Halkin, Každan, Kolias, Oikonomidès, Ohnsorge, Stein, Vasiliev, and Vogt are among the authors whose several works are cited *infra*.

² V. Grumel, "La chronologie des événements du règne de Léon VI," *Echos d'Orient*, 35 (1936), 6-42. This article is cited simply as "Grumel."

³ For short bibliography of "Symeon Logotheta," see G. Ostrogorsky, *GBS*³, 123 and also Gy. Moravcsik in *DOP*, 15 (1961), 110-122. The printed versions of the Logothete's Chronicle which are closest to his own composition are those of the Continuator of George the Monk (CSHB, 32, 763-924) and Theodosius Melitenus (ed. by T. L. F. Tafel [Munich, 1859]). The former is the more readily available to scholars, and I refer mainly to it (as CGM). The MS Vindobon. hist. gr. 37 preserves some excellent variants, which are nearly always right and hence of capital importance: see S. Šestakov, "O Rukopisjakh Simeona Logotheta," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 5 (1898), 19-62, and *infra*, pp. 102-108. The versions of the Continuator of Theophanes and of Pseudo-Symeon are separate recensions of the original *Chronicle*, and do not concern us here except when they draw unwarranted conclusions from their source. It may here be remarked, once for all, that Pseudo-Symeon's allocation of events among regnal years is altogether arbitrary and misleading. His chronology is wrong nine times out of ten, and if he is right the tenth time, he is so by mere accident. No date given by him should be accepted without independent confirmation; and I leave his version out of account as evidence for this article.

right order, the essential elements around which the connected story must be written.

The *Chronicle* is such a story. It is a coherent account of the *disjecta membra* of the annalist. Most often the chronicler will wait until the story ends, and then write it down connectedly from the beginning, so that all of it appears in his narrative at the chronological stage of its last significant event. The Byzantine formula for this method of compilation is μικρόν τι ἀναλαμβάντες, or, "to go back a little." Here, says the chronicler, in the year so-and-so, we find such-and-such an event; but, in order to explain this event, we have to "go back a little" and trace its antecedents. This is necessary, and indeed inevitable, if coherence is to be achieved and causation explained. Innumerable instances of this method will occur to the reader of chronicles.

An instance of dating a series of events to the year of its last recorded event has been noted by M. Canard⁴ in the Arab chronicle of Tabari. Tabari places the revolt of Andronicus Ducas, his resistance at Kabala, and his subsequent defection to Tarsus and Bagdad, all in A.H. 294, that is, October 22, 906 to October 11, 907. It can, however, be shown⁵ that the revolt of Andronicus began as early as October 905, and that he did not arrive in Bagdad until more than a twelvemonth later. Tabari finds this last event correctly dated to A.H. 294, and concludes that the whole series of events is datable to that year. As we shall see,⁶ a similar, but perfectly understandable, distortion is found in the Byzantine account of the same transaction. The Logothete, in compiling his chronicle, finds the escape of Constantine Ducas from Bagdad and his return to Constantinople, an event which naturally made some stir, dated by his annals to the winter of 907-908. But obviously he cannot repeat the annalist's notice and leave it at that: he has to tell how and why Constantine Ducas ever came to be at Bagdad in the first place. This necessitates a "cast back" to the initial revolt of Constantine's father Andronicus, in 905; but it does not invalidate the chronicler's accuracy. It is merely a question of determining, in each case, which event the chronicler has chosen as the chronological peg on which to hang his connected narrative; and this, most often, it is easy enough to do.

One more brief example must suffice to illustrate the principle. At CGM, 841/1-8 the Logothete records the deposition of Photius by Basil I in the period between the earthquake of January 869 and the birth of Alexander in November 870. This at first sight is a blunder, since we know that Photius was deposed in September 867. But we read on and find that the Logothete's point of reference is the anti-Photian Council of October 869, which requires a brief "cast back" to 867 to explain it. Once more the Logothete's chronological accuracy is irreproachable.

In other cases, though these are less frequent, the "cast" is made, not backwards, but forwards, in order to round off and finish a story whose chief

⁴ M. Canard, "Deux épisodes des relations diplomatiques arabo-byzantines au Xe siècle," *Bulletin d'études orientales, Damas*, 13 (1949-51), 60-1, note 4.

⁵ R. J. H. Jenkins, "Leo Choerosphactes and the Saracen Vizier," *ZRV*, 8 (1963), 167-75.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 110.

event lies in the past. This device may be marked with the words ἄλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὕστερον or, "but that was later on." Examples of the "cast forward" are: at CGM, 857/4 the death of Leo VI's second wife Zoe is recorded before that of her father, who in fact predeceased her. But this is merely because the chronicler wishes, quite properly, to round off the story of Zoe's marriage, reign, and death in a single paragraph. At her marriage and coronation, which are the important things about her, her father was of course still alive. Or again, at CGM, 846/10-847/9 the arrest and imprisonment of Leo VI by his father are correctly placed in the year 883, but the story carries us on to the young Emperor's release in July 886.⁷

In order, therefore, to determine whether a chronicle is compiled on the basis of accurately kept annalistic information, we have to establish whether the events recorded, or else the "points of reference" in any connected series of events, do or do not follow one another chronologically. At first sight, the allowances to be made for the possible "cast back" or "cast forward" might seem too wide to permit an accurate determination: in other words, our freedom to choose what particular event gave rise to any coherent narrative might enable us to fit almost any two consecutive articles into chronological order. But closer examination shows that this is very far from the truth.

In the first place, a large proportion of the Logothete's notices are not of series of events, but of single events, which require neither "casts backward" nor "casts forward." If any of these single events is demonstrably earlier in time than an event which precedes it in the text of the chronicle, then the chronological system here postulated has broken down, and no reliance can be placed on it. In the second place, even when we are dealing with notices which comprise whole series of events, we can apply the following absolute formula: if in any two notices, A and B, the earliest event in A is demonstrably later than the latest event in B, the same consequences follow. An example of this has already been referred to, in another connection, above. At CGM, 847/1-2 we find an account of the three-months imprisonment of Leo VI. Most people assume that these three months were April-July 886. Yet, in the very next section (CGM, 847/13) we read of a Byzantine defeat which beyond all doubt is identical with that which is dated by Tabari to the year 883. Either, then, our system breaks down here, or else the facts recorded have been misunderstood by modern historians. We shall offer the solution of this puzzle in its proper place. In the third place, the principle of "cast back" or "cast forward" can be applied only to connected and uninterrupted narratives such as CGM, 866/12-868/10. By contrast, CGM, 870/18ff. tells us of three separate events: the illness of Leo VI, the fire in the candle factory, and the death of Leo VI. Here, the first event cannot be regarded as a "cast back" from the third, owing to the intervention of the second: and this has a bearing on the date of Himerius' Cretan campaign (CGM, 870/13-17), as will be seen in due course. All these limitations must be rigidly applied when passing judgement on chronological sequence.

⁷ *Infra*, p. 102.

Having laid down the guiding principles for our enquiry into the Logothete's chronological accuracy, we must now proceed to look at the internal evidence for the sources used by this writer in the various parts of his chronicle.

In an article published in the *Vizantijskij Vremennik* for 1959, A. P. Každan has tried to establish the process by which the Chronicle of the Logothete reached its present state.⁸ According to his reasoning, the Logothete Symeon compiled his first "redaction" in the period between 948 and 963. The sources on which the Logothete relied were of three kinds, corresponding to three periods about which he wrote. These periods Každan divides as follows: 1, the reigns of Michael III and Basil I (A.D. 842-886); 2, the reigns of Leo VI and Alexander (A.D. 886-913); and 3, the minority reign of Constantine VII, with his mother Zoe, and the reign of Romanus I, including the four years between the deposition of the latter and his death in 948 (A.D. 913-948). The prime source for the first of these periods Každan believes to have been a lost biography of Basil I, which described that Emperor's life from the time when he reached Constantinople (*ca.* 856) until he died (886). But this was no ordinary biography. It was written with the express purpose of making the picture of its "hero" as black as possible; and, thinks Každan, it may have been written by a partisan of Photius, between the year of Photius' dismissal by Leo VI (886) and that of the ex-Patriarch's death, some time in the 890's. The chief source for the second period of the Logothete's chronicle (the reigns of Leo VI and Alexander) Každan believes to have been *Annals*, which recorded the chief events of these years chronologically, and laid especial and characteristic emphasis on prodigious happenings, such as eclipses and earthquakes. Finally, for the third period, 913-948, the Logothete relied on his own personal recollections and on oral information of contemporaries.

With some parts of this hypothesis every informed historian will agree. Leaving aside for the moment the diagnosis of the source or sources for the first period, there can be no doubt whatever that the source for the second is in fact a series of *Annals*: and one, we may add, that was kept with much accuracy. The conjecture that the source of the third period was personal recollection, helped by oral information, is strengthened by the fact that this kind of source is often mistaken in detail; and we do in fact discover several inaccuracies in this third period which are not apparent in the second, based on written documents. For example, the Logothete was obviously convinced that Romanus Lecapenus was crowned emperor on December 17, 919. The order of his text makes this quite clear.⁹ First comes the coronation of Romanus; then, that of his wife, on the following January 6 (920, as the author believes). Then, that of his son Christopher, on the following Whitsunday. And then, correctly, the promulgation of the *Tomus Unionis* shortly afterwards, in the same eighth indiction (920). It could have been argued that the Logothete was right as to the order of events, and had merely taken the day of the month of Romanus' coronation from the wrong almanack: that of 920, instead of that of

⁸ A. P. Každan, "Khronika Simeona Logofeta," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 15 (1959), 125-43.

⁹ CGM, 890/12-23.

919. But this will not do: since we have the unequivocal evidence of the preamble to the *Tomus Unionis* itself that, at the time of its promulgation (July 920), Romanus was still only *basileopator*, and not yet emperor.¹⁰ It was left to Grumel to point out the Logothete's blunder, and to prove incontestably that Romanus was crowned at the end of 920, and not at the end of 919.¹¹

Then, again, rather earlier in the same division of his chronicle,¹² the Logothete records the betrayal of Adrianople to Symeon of Bulgaria in September 914; and, after this, the death of the Saracen admiral Damian at Strobilos. Yet, as we know from Ibn al-Athir, Damian died before July 28, 914.¹³

These are errors in chronological sequence which may or may not arise from the fact that, in the last division of his narrative, the Logothete was relying on his own memory of events that had occurred in his own time. But, because the Logothete makes mistakes (very few, it is true: in the main his record is chronologically accurate) in his last period, we cannot conclude from this that he made mistakes in the order of events during the reigns of Basil I and Leo VI and Alexander, which he necessarily took from written records. Indeed, it may be repeated, the whole point of this article is to show that, in his narrative of the years 867 to 913, he is not demonstrably guilty of one single error in chronological sequence.

At this point, of course, we come up against the contention of Každan that the principal source for the reigns of Michael III *and* Basil I was a pejorative Life, or Biography, of Basil I. The Logothete's version of the reign of Michael III, even after 856, when Michael attained supreme power, is full of chronological incongruities. The reduction and conversion of Bulgaria (864) are placed *before* the defeat of the Emir of Melitene at Poson (863).¹⁴ And Bardas is referred to as "Caesar" at least as early as 863, before either of these events, although, as we know from independent evidence, he was not raised to this rank until 864.¹⁵ Then, the story hurries us back five years to 858, to the quarrel of Ignatius with Bardas (here once more called "Caesar"), and to the appointment of Photius as patriarch:¹⁶ (there is of course no question of a "cast back" here, since no incident in the article is later than 858; it is mere misplacement, due to ignorance). Then, after mention of the Russian attack (860), we skip five years and come to the appointment of Basil as chamberlain (865).¹⁷ Thereafter, the events of 866-867 follow in what is presumably their proper order.

Whether the origins of this confused account of Michael's reign are a pejorative biography of Basil I, as Každan maintains, need not here be discussed. Where, however, we have to disagree with Každan is in his linking the Logo-

¹⁰ Mansi, XVIII A, col. 336 B.

¹¹ *Echos d'Orient*, 35 (1936), 333-5.

¹² CGM, 880/5-13.

¹³ A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II, Part 2, "Extraits des sources arabes traduits par Marius Canard" (Brussels, 1950) p. 145; referred to hereafter as "Vasiliev, II/2."

¹⁴ CGM, 824-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 824/10: *AI PHO*, 2/2 (1934), 899-900, note 2.

¹⁶ CGM, 826.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 826-7.

thete's "Michael III" and his "Basil I" to the same principal source. The Logothete's "Basil I" is an altogether different kind of document from his "Michael III." Where the "Michael" is verbose and anecdotal, the "Basil" is concise and factual. Where the "Michael" is chronologically vague and inaccurate, the "Basil" is chronologically careful and correct, as we shall see. In fact it seems clear that, whatever may have been the source of the "Michael," the "Basil" rests on *Annals*, and very probably on the same series of *Annals* which formed the basis of the "Leo VI" and the "Alexander." From the point of view of their sources, therefore, the three divisions of the Logothete's Chronicle are: 1. Michael III; 2. Basil I, Leo VI, and Alexander; 3. Constantine VII and Romanus I to A.D. 948.

One of Každan's reasons for distinguishing the "Basil I" from the "Leo VI" is the absence from the former of portents and prodigies such as are commonly recorded in annals. But this is not quite accurate. The earthquake of January 9, 869¹⁸ is no different in principle from the eclipse of August 8, 891.¹⁹ There are, to be sure, many more such events recorded of the reign of Leo VI than of the reign of Basil I: in the former we find one eclipse, one comet, one gale, and two prophecies. But the text of the "Leo VI" is nearly two and a half times longer than that of the "Basil I"; and we must include in the latter the account of Basil's snake-bite as a portentous event, and also his own prophecy of the hard times to be undergone during the future reign of his son.²⁰

So, then, the Logothete's account of the reigns of Basil I, Leo VI, and Alexander derives its basic facts and chronological order from a series of *Annals* probably kept by a Constantinopolitan monastery (this may be deduced from the emphasis laid on construction of churches, foundation of monasteries, Church councils, and so on). The Logothete's selection of incidents is undoubtedly dictated by dislike of the Macedonian emperors, as Hirsch long ago pointed out.²¹ Like most Byzantine chroniclers, the Logothete slanted his narrative, not by falsifying it, but by omitting what was good and successful and including what was mischievous or disastrous: *suppressio veri* leading to *suggestio falsi*. But this prejudice does not affect the order in which the events so selected are put down. Our contention that this order is everywhere accurate can be substantiated only by a detailed examination of these three reigns. Let us take them in order.

BASIL I (CGM, 839-848)

We have first to see how many of the events recorded are datable independently, and next whether these datable events are in fact given chronologically.

CGM, 839/3-7 (cap. 1): Accession and proclamation of Basil, 867 (i.e., Wednesday, September 24: Muralt,²² 446).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 840/14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 852/12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 844/1, 847/7-9.

²¹ F. Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien* (Leipzig, 1876), 63, 69.

²² E. de Muralt, *Essai de chronographie byzantine* (St. Petersburg, 1855).

- CGM, 840/14-22 (cap. 4): Forty days of earthquake, starting on Sunday, January 9, 869 (the day of the month is also given by MPG, 105, col. 549 A and *Synaxar. Cpl.*, and the day of the week, Sunday, by *Script. orig. Constantinopolitanarum* [Preger] 2, 272, which is decisive for 869).
- CGM, 841/1-8 (cap. 5): The anti-Photian Council (ἡγάγε τόμον μετὰ Ῥωαίων ἐπισκόπων), Wednesday, October 5, 869–Tuesday, February 28, 870 (Muralt, 451–2); Birth of Alexander, Thursday, November 23, 870 (Adontz, *Byzantion*, 8 [1933], 506).
- CGM, 841/9-20 (cap. 6): The anti-Paulician campaigns, ending with the sack of Tephrike and death of Chrysocheir, 871–2 (Vasiliev, II/2, 6; Vasiliev, II, 93).²³
- CGM, 843/5-9 (cap. 11): Fall of Syracuse, Tuesday, May 20, 878 (Vasiliev, II/2, 136; Vasiliev, II, 93).
- CGM, 844/11-13 (cap. 16): Rehabilitation of Photius, 879 (N.B. It is important to note that this event is dated from the reconciliation with Pope John VIII in 879, rather than from the *de facto* restoration of Photius in 877: exactly as, in cap. 5 *supra*, his deposition is dated from the anti-Photian Council of 869 rather than from the *de facto* deposition of 867. This may throw some light on the nature of the annalistic source. Muralt, 458–9; and see *infra* p. 101).
- CGM, 844/17-18 (cap. 17): Expedition of Basil I and his son Constantine to the east, 879 (Vasiliev, II, 71–2, 94; ? cf. Bar-Hebraeus, 148).²⁴
- CGM, 844/19 (cap. 18): Death of the Emperor Constantine, Thursday, September 3, 879 (Halkin, *Byzantion*, 24 [1954], 14–17).
- CGM, 845/1-4 (cap. 19): *Encaenia* of the New Church, Sunday, May 1, 880 (Jenkins and Mango, *DOP*, 9–10 [1955–1956], p. 130).
- CGM, 845/9-11 (cap. 20): Defeat and death of the protovestiary Procopius in Sicily, 882 (Vasiliev, II/2, 138; Vasiliev, II, 88).
- CGM, 847/12-14 (cap. 25): Defeat of Stypiotes at Chrysobullum near Tarsus, Saturday, September 14, 883 (Vasiliev, II/2, 9; Vasiliev, II, 82).
- CGM, 848/15-16 (cap. 27): Death of Basil I, Monday, August 29, 886.

²³ A. A. Vasiliev, *Vizantijska i Araby ... za Vreme Makedonskoj Dinastii* (St. Petersburg, 1902); referred to hereafter as "Vasiliev, II."

²⁴ *The Chronography of Bar Hebraeus*, tr. by E. A. Wallis-Budge (Oxford, 1935).

Here, then, we have a dozen or more incidents from the reign of Basil I, almost all of them datable on independent evidence, which the Logothete has placed in their correct chronological sequence. This is surely *prima facie* justification for the hypothesis that those incidents which cannot be checked independently are equally correctly placed.

Almost at once (CGM, 840/8-13) a test case occurs by which the whole theory stands or falls: the question of the date of (birth and) baptism of the future patriarch Stephen, third or fourth son of the Emperor Basil I. It is one of those small, irritating questions which have almost no significance for the advancement of historical knowledge, but which historians are eagerly and almost passionately concerned to settle for good, one way or the other. Perhaps the greatest historical importance that can be attributed to it relates to the matter under discussion here: can it, or can it not, be used as evidence for the invariable accuracy of the Logothete's chronological order in his account of the reign of Basil I? I believe that it can.

The evidence of the Logothete can be read only one way.²⁵ Stephen was baptized on a Christmas Day between September 867 and January 869 (that is, Christmas 867 or 868); whereas Alexander was born after the opening, if not after the close, of the anti-Photian Council (October 869-February 870): that is, in November 870 or, just conceivably, November 869. There is no way of getting around this. It is either right or wrong.

The reasons for thinking it wrong are soon told. Nicetas Paphlago and Pseudo-Symeon,²⁶ as is well known, record that among the ruses adopted by the exiled Photius to recover the imperial favor (i.e., between 870 and 877) was his forgery of a prophecy which hinted at the succession of a dynasty called BEKLAS, a name composed of the initial letters of *Basil, Eudocia, Konstantine, Leo, Alexander, and Stephen*. This forgery was doubtless widely known and quoted at the time; but it proves nothing for the order of birth of Basil's sons, since the word does not purport to represent such an order, and in any case the alternative form BEKLSA was unpronounceable. However, there are better reasons for supposing Alexander the elder of the two: a direct statement to this effect by his own nephew Constantine Porphyrogenitus,²⁷ and a direct statement of the contemporary *Vita Euthymii*.²⁸ Hence many scholars, including and since Hirsch,²⁹ have assumed that the chronicler's order is misplaced here, and that Stephen was in truth the youngest of Basil's sons.

At first sight, the statement of Constantine Porphyrogenitus seems to be weighty. A man should, one would think, know the order in which his own uncles were born. However, Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself was not born until twelve years after his uncle Stephen died (905, 893); and Stephen had been dead more than fifty years before his nephew came to write about him. Constantine was, moreover, not wholly free from aberrations of this kind:

²⁵ CGM, 840/8-13.

²⁶ MPG, 105, cols. 565-8; Pseudo-Symeon (Bonn), 689/7 ff.

²⁷ Theoph. Cont. 264/15.

²⁸ Ed. by P. Karlin-Hayter, *Byzantion*, 25-7 (1955-7), 10/21: referred to hereafter as "VE."

²⁹ *Byzantinische Studien*, 65.

he made three notorious blunders in tracing the parentage of his own daughter-in-law.³⁰ But we need not go so far back as this to discover similar uncertainties. My own Mother had five brothers. I believe I know who the eldest was, but could not with any confidence state the order in which the next four were born: and if I tried to do so off-hand, I should very likely be wrong. Yet only two of them died before I was born, and the other three I knew well. It is perfectly possible, as Adontz³¹ contends, that Constantine Porphyrogenitus was misled by the story of BEKLAS.

The statement of *Vita Euthymii* that Stephen was ὑστάτος of the brothers, though equally careless, is more excusable. The author was not a relative of the Patriarch, but, like everyone else, had heard the BEKLAS story and drew his own conclusions. Adontz, therefore, who vindicates the prior birth of Stephen, seems to me to be right: and this for an additional reason, which he does not cite but which both Amandos³² and Kolias³³ mention. In a letter written in 933 by Romanus I's minister Daphnopates to Anastasius, metropolitan of Heraclea, who was protesting against the premature appointment of the young prince Theophylact as patriarch, Daphnopates says:³⁴ "Are you to accept or reject the appointment of Master Stephen, who in our own time was made patriarch *at nineteen years of age*?" Now, Stephen, as was known to Muralt and De Boor and has been since confirmed by Grumel, was enthroned as patriarch on December 25, 886.³⁵ If he was nineteen years old at the time, then he was born in November 867 and christened on the following Christmas Day. The testimony of Daphnopates seems to me to be decisive. To begin with, a man who is arguing with another on a point of principle is more likely to be sure of his facts than one who is making an offhand and uncontroversial statement. Again, if Daphnopates had been able to assure Anastasius that Stephen had been only fifteen or sixteen years old at the time of his appointment as patriarch, his argument in favor of the elevation of Theophylact at sixteen³⁶ would have trebled in weight. But he could not do so, without leaving himself open to refutation. Stephen, then, was turned nineteen at Christmas 886, and was therefore born late in 867, probably in November of that year, about fourteen months after his elder brother Leo. Incidentally, this throws an even more ghastly light on the murder of Michael III. That Michael's one-time favorite Eudocia Ingerina should have helped to stupefy him with drink³⁷ so as to facilitate his murder, is bad enough. That she should have done so when seven months gone in pregnancy aggravates the crime. Was this one reason why the child, when born two months later, was destined for the church?

³⁰ DAI, Commentary (London, 1962), note on 26/15.

³¹ N. Adontz, "La portée historique de l'oraison funèbre de Basile I," *Byzantion*, 8 (1933), 505.

³² K. Amandos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ κράτους* (1947), 59.

³³ G. T. Kolias, *Βιογραφικά Στεφάνου Α' Οικουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου*, in *Προσφορά εἰς Στ. Π. Κυριακίδην* (Salonica, 1953), 362.

³⁴ ΔΙΕΕ, 2 (1885-9), 403/13-15: <καὶ ὁ> ἐν τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς γενεᾷ κύρις Στέφανος πατριάρχης ἐννεακαιδέκα ἐτῆς χειροτονηθεὶς ἄρᾳ γε ἀποδεχθήσεται παρὰ σοὶ ἡ ἀπαγορευθήσεται;

³⁵ Muralt, 467; Grumel, 10-13.

³⁶ Cf. Cedrenus II, 332/7; Muralt (454) will have Stephen born as late as 872, which would make him only fourteen in 886.

³⁷ CGM, 836/18-19.

Two further facts point to the same conclusion. First, we have the statement of CGM, 841/6–8 that, when Alexander was born, here was, at last (οὗτος), a true-born son of Basil and Eudocia. If the calumny uttered of Leo VI—that he was the son of Michael and Eudocia—was also uttered of Stephen, as this passage suggests, then Stephen must have been conceived while Michael († September 23, 867) was still alive. Second, this conclusion coincides absolutely with the testimony of his contemporary Leo Choerosphactes, published by Kolias,³⁸ that Stephen lived twenty-five years. So he did: twenty-five years and six months, to be exact (November 867–May 893).³⁹

The enquiry, then, so far confirms our theory of the correct order of events in the Logothete's chronicle; and establishes, in my opinion, that Stephen was older, by just three years, than his brother Alexander.

CGM, 841–843 (cap. 7–10) give no independently datable information. The building of Ignatius' church and monastery (cap. 7), the scandal over Thecla (cap. 8),⁴⁰ the conversion of the Jews (cap. 9), and the death of Nicholas the prosmonarius (cap. 10) should all follow in sequence between 872 and 877–8, but need not each be related to a separate year. As regards the conversion of the Jews, this was obviously a long process, and lasted through most of Basil's reign.⁴¹ The Logothete's notice plainly refers to some great public ceremony at Constantinople, in which representative Jews were solemnly baptized and then munificently rewarded.

CGM, 843/3–9 (cap. 11) describes the excavation of the foundations of the New Church, which was therefore begun in 877 or early in 878,⁴² before the news of the investiture of Syracuse reached Constantinople. The fall of Syracuse (May 20, 878) took place before the arrival of the imperial navy, which was consequently dispatched thither around March or April 878.

The intrigue of the Empress Eudocia with Xylinites (CGM, 842/10–12, cap. 12) is probably datable to the second half of 878, when she was between forty and forty-five years of age, since it is placed after the fall of Syracuse and before the two campaigns against the eastern Saracens in the following year (cap. 15, 17). CGM, 843/15–844/7 (cap. 13, 14) continues the story of the building of

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, 358–9.

³⁹ This is one of the few points over which I have to disagree with G. Ostrogorsky (*GBS*³, 194–5, note 2). It is unnecessary to say which of the two of us is more likely *a priori* to be right, but I am convinced that my arguments are in sum persuasive. Cf. also Pseudo-Symeon, 700/4–5 and MPG, 109, col. 653A, in both of which passages Stephen is given priority over Alexander.

⁴⁰ As noted by F. Hirsch (*Byzantinische Studien*, 66, note 1), this Thecla was the sister, not of Basil I, but of Michael III: so that we ought to insert Μιχαήλ between ἀδελφῆς and τοῦ βασιλέως at CGM, 842/3. In the next line, μέτριον should be written with a capital initial: it was the man's name (cf. *Synaxarion Cpl.*, 721/25). The correct reading is Μέτριόν τινα ἄνθρωπον αὐτῆς γελωτοποιὸν ὄντα, "one Metrios, her servant and fool:" cf. Šestakov, *op. cit.*, 41.

⁴¹ A tolerably accurate date for the commencement of the persecution (perhaps undertaken by Basil because of the supposedly Jewish origins of the Amorian house, cf. Theoph. Cont. 42–43) is given by the Jewish *Chronicle* of Ahimaaz of Oria, which has "im Jahre 800 seit der Zerstörung der heiligen Stadt," that is, by Titus. See S. Kaufmann, *Die Chronik des Achimaaz von Oria* (850–1054) (Frankfort, 1896), who (13–14) equates this with A.D. 868. But the persecution lasted all through Basil's reign (*ibid.*, 16, 20), till 886. The year 868 is supported by the mention of the raid on Oria by Saudan of Bari (*ibid.*, 16–17), that is, before 869, when Saudan was shut up in Bari by Lewis II: cf. *DAI*, Commentary, notes on 29/104–12.

⁴² R. J. H. Jenkins and C. A. Mango, *DOP*, 9–10 (1955–1956), 130 and note 35.

the New Church in 878–879, on the foundations laid in cap. 11. Then (CGM, 844/11–16, cap. 16) follows the brief account of Photius' rehabilitation, dated, as we have seen,⁴³ from the consent and recognition given to this rehabilitation by Pope John VIII. The Pope's letters, to Basil, Photius, and the Oriental patriarchs, in which he accords his recognition, were written in the middle of August 879,⁴⁴ which is doubtless the operative date of our notice: the Council which officially reinstated Photius did not begin to sit till November. Cap. 16–18, with their tight chronology, throw the suddenness of Constantine's death into vivid relief. The papal letters date from mid-August; then, Basil and Constantine return (ὑπέστρεψε)⁴⁵ triumphantly from Germanicea (end of August); then, Constantine dies (September 3).

Cap. 19 and 20 are, as we have seen, independently datable to 880 and 882; and so we come on to CGM, 845–847 (cap. 21–24): to the malign influence of Theodore of Santabaris and to the plots laid against the young Emperor Leo. We cannot here discuss the significance of these stories, but merely their chronology.

Cap. 21 records a process (the growing influence acquired by Santabareus), and two incidents (the apparition of the dead Constantine and the dedication of a monastery in his name). The chronological point of reference of the narrative is clearly the dedication of the monastery (cf. cap. 7, 10, etc.), which, according to our reckoning, took place in 882. There is no improbability here: such a monastery may well have needed two or three years to complete, especially if it was being built concurrently with the New Church. The rest of cap. 21 is therefore a "cast back" to explain this; and the conjuring up of Constantine's phantom no doubt took place earlier, and shortly after his death in 879.

CGM, 846/7–9 (cap. 23) records the young Emperor Leo's marriage to Theophano Martinakiou, which took place almost certainly in 882,⁴⁶ and quite probably in September, at or just after Leo's sixteenth birthday. The difficulties begin with CGM, 846/10ff. (cap. 24), that is, with the date and length of Leo's imprisonment by his father.

Vogt assumes that Leo's arrest and detention fell in the year 886, so that he was imprisoned from April to July 20 (St. Elijah's Day) of that year and then set at liberty.⁴⁷ This would agree with CGM, 847/1 that he was confined during three *months*. However, if so, then cap. 24 is sadly out of place, and we are up against another test case for our theory. For not only does cap. 24 come before cap. 26, which tells of the conspiracy of Kourkouas liquidated on

⁴³ *Supra*, p. 97.

⁴⁴ *Mon. Germ. Hist.*, Ep. VII, 167–187.

⁴⁵ CGM, 844/18.

⁴⁶ A. Vogt, "La Jeunesse de Léon VI le sage," *Revue historique*, 174 (1934), 415–6, suggests Christmas 881, but this is mere inference: cf. *VE*, ed. by de Boor, 105. Since the marriage is recorded *after* the defeat of Procopius in 882 (*supra*, p. 97), Vogt's date should be moved forward some months, to the latter part of 882. It is true that Procopius' defeat is given by Ibn al-Athir (Vasiliev, II/2, 138) as falling in the year August 881–July 882, so that it is just possible to date it before Christmas 881: but that all the operations which precede it in Ibn al-Athir's account are to be dated between August and December 881, is most improbable.

⁴⁷ Vogt, *op. cit.*, 420–3.

March 25, again, according to Vogt, 886,⁴⁸ but it also comes before cap. 25, which tells of the Byzantine defeat near Tarsus, dated quite certainly by Tabari to September 14, 883.⁴⁹

The confusion is more apparent than real. Cap. 24 follows cap. 23, which tells of Leo's marriage. After the marriage, the bride Theophano had a daughter, Eudocia, while her husband was still at liberty.⁵⁰ This brings us to the summer of 883, at earliest, if the marriage took place in September 882. The next notice (cap. 24) is Leo's arrest on a charge of high treason against his father. But we can be more accurate still. Cap. 25 tells us that Andreas, the commander-in-chief, was recalled before the battle of Chrysobullum near Tarsus (September 14, 883), which was thus lost by the incompetence of his substitute Stypiotēs. However, when the Byzantine army arrived near Tarsus, as Tabari tells us,⁵¹ Andreas was still in command. Therefore he was recalled in late August or early September, on the eve of the campaign. And why was he recalled? He was recalled ὡς τὰ Λέοντος φρονῶν, that is, "as a partisan of Leo,"⁵² and on suspicion of being concerned in the treason for which Leo already lay under arrest. Leo's arrest must therefore be datable to the late summer of 883, and not to April 886: otherwise there would have been no charge to make against Andreas.

The chronicler goes on, by means of the usual "cast forward," to round off the story with a mention of Leo's release on St. Elijah's Day. But in what year? If the reading μῆνας τρεῖς be retained as the duration of Leo's imprisonment, this involves us in insuperable difficulties, since St. Elijah's Day 884 fell nearly eleven months after August 883. But here the reading of Vindobon. hist. gr. 37, to which reference has already been made,⁵³ comes decisively to our aid. This version states that Leo was estranged from his father, not for three months, but for *three years*. This was the version known in the fourteenth century to Nicephorus Gregoras,⁵⁴ who says that Leo had completed the third *year* of his imprisonment when liberated. The whole incident at once becomes plain. Leo was arrested in or about August 883, and his arrest was followed by the dismissal of Andreas. Leo was freed on Wednesday, July 20, 886, after three years (all but a week or two) of captivity. Kurtz⁵⁵ already suspected the true solution of this problem; and Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself⁵⁶ states that his father was imprisoned "a long time," which is far more appropriate to three years than to three months. That the conspiracy of 883,

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Vasiliev, II/2, 9.

⁵⁰ "Zwei griechische Texte über die Hl. Theophano," ed. by E. Kurtz, *Zapiski Imp. Akad. Nauk*, 8th Ser., Hist.-phil. otdel., t. III, no. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1898), 8/5: καὶ τοῦ τέκνου.

⁵¹ Vasiliev, II/2, 9.

⁵² Andrew Craterus may have been a son of Leo Craterus, who had acted as ἀνάδοχος at the hair clipping of the infant Leo, and was thus a kind of gossip or spiritual father of the Emperor: see *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn), 622/8.

⁵³ See note 3, *supra*, and Šestakov, *op. cit.*, 41: ἐποίησε δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Λέων ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπὸ ὅψεως τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ χρόνους γ'.

⁵⁴ Kurtz, *op. cit.*, 38/28-9: ἐξάγει τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ δεσποτηρίου ἔτος ἤδη τρίτον ἐν τούτῳ διηνυκῷ. See also *Synaxarion Cpl.*, 315/5-6, χρόνοις τρισί.

⁵⁵ Kurtz, *ibid.*, 62, note 45.

⁵⁶ Theoph. Cont., 350/15-16.

whether Leo was or was not concerned in it, was thought to be serious, and even perhaps successful, can be seen from the fact that the Arab chronicler actually records Basil's *death* in 883,⁵⁷ and then again in its proper place three years later (886). This suggests that Basil's assassination in the former year was widely rumored, at least at Bagdad.

Then, at CGM, 847/15 ff. (cap. 26), with Leo out of the way, the great plot of John Krokoas (Kourkouas) and the sixty-six nobles comes to maturity; is betrayed, as Vogt⁵⁸ has seen, in 886; and finally wound up on March 25 of that year.⁵⁹ Its liquidation was naturally followed by the release of Leo,⁶⁰ who could have had no hand in this, whatever hand he may have had in the previous, conspiracy. Cap. 27, as we saw, ends the reign with Basil's death.

So far, then, and subject to an occasional "cast back" or "forward" from the central event, to explain its origin or trace its consequence, the chronology of events is never found to be inaccurate. Let us pass on to the reign of Leo VI himself, and apply the same methods.

LEO VI (CGM 848-871):

Here, in a much longer text, the case is much plainer. As before, we will begin by listing the events which are independently datable, making full use of Father Grumel's invaluable article alluded to above; and then discuss the residuum.

- CGM, 848/19-20 (cap. 1): Leo ruled "twenty-five years and eight months," i.e. from August 30, 886 to May 11, 912.
- CGM, 849/16-21 (cap. 3): Stephen was patriarch "six years and five months," i.e., from December 25, 886 to May 17/18, 893 (Grumel, 10-13); Stephen's career is rounded off by a "cast forward" here, though his death is recorded once more in its proper place in cap. 10.
- CGM, 850/1-3 (cap. 4): Destruction of St. Thomas' church by fire: this is dated by Michael Syrus⁶¹ to the year 1200, that is, A.D. 887.
- CGM, 852/5-11 (cap. 8): Victory of Aion of Benevento over Constantine *o epi trapezes*, June 887 (Gay,⁶² 143; Hirsch, 72).

⁵⁷ Vasiliev, II/2, 9; cf. Bar Hebraeus, *ed. cit.*, 149. This suggests that when Tabari, anno 886, states that Basil was *killed* by his own three sons, he was telling the truth. His testimony, doubtless historical, is the strongest support of Vogt's theory (*op. cit.*, 427) to the same effect, though Vogt, oddly enough, does not cite it.

⁵⁸ Vogt, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

⁵⁹ CGM, 848/3.

⁶⁰ The picturesque incident of the parrot who exclaimed αἰ, αἰ, κύρ Λέων and thus reduced the company to tears, is not recorded by the Logothete, but by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, at Theoph. Cont. 350/21 ff. No doubt the story is substantially true, since it would be very hard to invent; but one may suspect that the bird in fact said, not αἰ, αἰ, κύρ Λέων but αἰ, αἰ, Κύριε ἑλέει or ἑλέησον ("God for His Mercy"), this being the kind of expletive which, owing to its being pronounced with special frequency and emphasis, parrots are notoriously prone to memorize and repeat.

⁶¹ Ed. and tr. by Chabot, III, 2, p. 119.

⁶² J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1904).

- CGM, 852/12-13 (cap. 9): Annular eclipse of the sun from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, August 8, 891, sun and moon each being in the fifteenth cycle.⁶³ (This is the only solar eclipse commemorated in the *Synaxarion Cpl.*, col. 878, where the date is given in detail and with complete accuracy.⁶⁴ Cf. Th. Ritter von Oppolzer, *Canon der Finsternisse*, p. 200, no. 4995, and chart 100. Western chronicles also record it: *MGH*, Scr. I, 52; III, 3. See Dobschütz, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 18 [1909], 104; and Grumel, *La Chronologie*, 464).
- CGM, 852/20-22 (cap. 10): Death of the patriarch Stephen, May 17/18, 893, and appointment of his successor Antony Cauleas, August, 893 (Grumel, 6, 10).
- CGM, 853-855 (cap. 11-14): War with Symeon of Bulgaria, 894-896 (G. Ostrogorsky, *GBS*,³ 213).
- CGM, 855/18-19 (cap. 15): Loss of Koron (Qurra) in Cappadocia, August 5, 897 (Vasiliev, II, 112-3; Vasiliev, II/2, 13).
- CGM, 856/14 (cap. 17): Death of St. Theophano, November 10, 897 (Grumel, 22-29): though her commemoration falls on December 16 (cf. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, 58, note 2).
- CGM, 856/18-857/4 (cap. 18): Leo marries Zoe Zaützina, probably after six months court mourning (cf. Halkin, *Byzantion*, 24 [1954], 15), in May 898. She reigned "one year and eight months," and therefore died December 899/January 900 (Grumel, 19-21). Her death is here recorded by a "cast forward," to round off her story: see *supra*, p. 93.
- CGM, 857/21 (cap. 19): Death of Stylian Zaützes, six months before that of Zoe, therefore June/July 899 (Grumel, 19-21).
- CGM, 860/1-4 (cap. 22): Death of the Patriarch Antony, February 12, 901, and appointment of his successor Nicholas Mysticus, March 1, 901 (Grumel, 8-9).
- CGM, 860/11 (cap. 24): Death of the Empress Eudocia, April 12, 901 (Grumel, 19).
- CGM, 860/20-21 (cap. 26): Loss of Taormina, August 1, 902 (Vasiliev, II, 125-6).

⁶³ Cf. Buchegger, *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 11 (1934-5), 29-39.

⁶⁴ G. T. Kolias, *Léon Choerosphactès* (Athens, 1939), 33-4, wrongly identifies this eclipse with a total eclipse visible in Scandinavia and North Russia on June 7, 894. If, as seems likely, Symeon of Bulgaria (Kolias, *ibid.*, p. 77) referred to the eclipse of 891 as that which was predicted προτέρουσι by Leo VI, then προτέρουσι here means simply "a year or two ago," and is valueless as an exact chronological criterion. Taken literally, it would imply a date of 893 for Symeon's letter to Choerosphactes, as Mercati (*Riv. degli Stud. Or.*, 10 [1923-5], 221) has seen.

- CGM, 861/8ff. (cap. 27): Attempted assassination of Leo VI in the church of St. Mocius, May 11, 903 (Grumel, 40-1).
- CGM, 863/6 (cap. 30): Fall of Thessalonica, July 31, 904 (Joh. Cameniata *ap.* Theoph. Cont. 519).
- CGM, 864/21 (cap. 32): Appearance of a comet, May 16, 905 (Muralt, 483; Grumel, *Echos d'Orient*, 36 [1937], 60-1).⁶⁵
- CGM, 865/2-3 (cap. 32): Baptism of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, January 6, 906.
- CGM, 865/16-21 (cap. 35): Expulsion and exile of the Patriarch Nicholas, February 1, 907.
- CGM, 868/21-22 (cap. 41): Coronation of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Sunday, May 15, 908 (Grierson and Jenkins, *Byzantion*, 32 [1962], 133-8).
- CGM, 869/20-870-9 (cap. 42): Lunar eclipse (March 20, 908) followed by the fall of Samonas, June 13, 908 (Jenkins, *Speculum*, 23 [1948], 234, note 99).
- CGM, 870/13 (cap. 43): Himerius sails for Crete, October 911 (his expedition fails in April or early May 912: Jenkins, Προσφορά εις Στ. Π. Κυριακίδην, 279-81).
- CGM, 870/18-20; 871/1-2 (cap. 44): Leo VI falls ill, before March 4, 912.
Leo VI dies, May 11, 912.

With regard to the last three of these notices, dating from the years 911-912, I must at once make an observation which should not be relegated to a footnote. The order of these notices invalidates a hypothesis put forward by me some years ago,⁶⁶ when I tried to show that Himerius' Cretan expedition was datable, not to *October* 911, but to the *eight months* between August 911 and April 912. While the main conclusion of that article, that Himerius' final defeat took place in April or early May 912, seems to be undoubtedly right, it now appears that the common reading 'Οκτωβρίῳ δὲ μηνί must after all be preferred to the ἐπὶ ὀκτῶ μηνῶς of Pseudo-Symeon. We are bound to conclude that Himerius' expedition to Crete started in October 911, which must be the operative date of the Logothete's article (cap. 43), and it is followed by the usual "cast forward" to round off the story. If the final defeat of Himerius (April/May 912) had been the occasion of the article, then this article must have appeared *after* the following notice of the Emperor Leo's illness, which declared itself *before March 4, 912*.⁶⁷ It is also impossible to regard the Emperor's death in May 912 as the occasion for all of cap. 44: the notice of his

⁶⁵ As is shown *infra*, p. 109, this phenomenon had no connection with the birth of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, which took place probably in the following September. The date of the comet's appearance is not absolutely certain. Both Muralt and Grumel give Thursday, May 16, 905, and this is the date *suggested* by the wording of the western chronicle. But the Chinese observers date its appearance specifically to Wednesday, May 22, so that possibly the Thursday of the western source is May 23 rather than 16: see J. Williams, *Observations of Comets . . . extracted from the Chinese Annals* (London, 1871), 52-3.

⁶⁶ R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Date of Leo VI's Cretan Expedition," Προσφορά εις Στ. Π. Κυριακίδην (Salonica, 1953), 279-80.

⁶⁷ CGM, 870/20: ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ τῶν νηστείων.

illness in or before March 912 cannot be a "cast back" from his death, since the two notices are divided by a third, that of the fire in the candle factory. The annalistic source certainly preserved these four events in their correct order: Himerius goes to Crete in October 911; Leo VI falls ill in or before March 912; a serious fire breaks out in the cathedral candle factory (? April 912); and Leo VI dies in May 912.

We may now proceed to examine the residual material of the Logothete's narrative, and see how it fits in between the chronological points already established.

The transfer of the body of Michael III to the church of the Holy Apostles (cap. 1), the deposition and confinement of Photius (cap. 2), and the appointment of Stylian Zaützes as magister and logothete (cap. 3) took place, in that order, between September 1 and December 25, 886. With regard to the first of these events, the phrase μετὰ τὸ αὐτοκρατορῆσαι (CGM, 849/2) confirms that it was the first official act of the reign, and therefore took place in September.

The capture of Hypsele by the Saracens and the process against Santabareus and Photius (cap. 4-6) took place in 887, and the fire which destroyed St. Thomas' church fell between them.

The siege of Samos and the promotion of Zaützes to the rank of *basileopator* (cap. 10) follow between August 891 and May 893. This is almost the only place where Grumel's chronology must be modified. He gives the year 888-9 for Zaützes' promotion,⁶⁸ but this is impossible: the eclipse of August 8, 891 intervenes decisively. Grumel is, however, manifestly right in dissociating the promotion from Leo VI's marriage to Zaützes' daughter, which took place not before 898 (see *supra*, p. 104). In fact, no marital significance attaches to the title of *basileopator*, even though it was later bestowed on Romanus Lecapenus, father-in-law of Constantine VII. It was an honorary title implying spiritual parentage or guardianship of the sovereign. It is said that Leo VI himself invented the rank for Zaützes.⁶⁹ This may be true; but his father had invented a similar title in favor of the widow Danelis, who μήτηρ καλεῖσθαι βασιλέως ἡξιώθη that is, "was accorded the rank of *basileometor*," and her son was adopted by Basil as his spiritual brother.⁷⁰

The revolt of Cherson (cap. 15) naturally followed immediately on the Byzantine defeat at Bulgarophygon (or "Bulgarogephyron," as we ought to write it): that is, late in 896 or early in 897.

The conspiracy of Zaützes' relatives to murder the Emperor at Damianou (cap. 16) occurs between August and November, 897.⁷¹

The expulsion and tonsuring of the corrupt Musicus and Stauracius (cap. 19) took place shortly before the death of Zaützes, which itself took place in June or July of 899.

⁶⁸ Grumel, 40; cf. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, 57, note 24.

⁶⁹ Theoph. Cont., 357/5-6: αὐτὸς καινουργήσας τὸ ὄνομα.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 318/21-2.

⁷¹ The mention of St. Theophano's death *after* the Bulgarian war and the loss of Koron (Qurra) rules out de Boor's conclusion, defended by Koliass (EEBΣ, 23 [1953], 332-5), that she died in 893, and confirms Grumel's date of November 10, 897.

Then follows the major conspiracy of Basil the Epeictes (cap. 20), and the consequent rise of Samonas.⁷² The conspiracy was hatched after the death of the Empress Zoe (CGM, 859/3), which took place in December 899 or January 900. Therefore, it was betrayed and frustrated in the early part of 900; and I have elsewhere conjectured that Arethas, who was examined on Easter Saturday 900, may have been implicated—however unjustly—in this conspiracy.⁷³

The next item is the taking of Demetrias by the Saracen Admiral Damian (cap. 22). As this is recorded after the appointment of Nicholas Mysticus as patriarch (March 1, 901) and before the death of the Empress Eudocia (April 12, 901), Demetrias fell in March or early April 901. Grumel is therefore right in rejecting the earlier date suggested for this event by Grégoire.⁷⁴

The next two chapters (23, 24) are a short piece of dynastic history rendered necessary by the notice of the Empress Eudocia's death at the end of it (CGM, 860/10–11). The brief notes on the "interim of Anna" (January to June 900)⁷⁵ and the marriage of Eudocia herself (June or July 900) are an understandable, and indeed essential, "cast back" to explain who this Eudocia was who died at this conjuncture. The account is perfectly connected, and not interrupted by any extraneous event.

Cap. 25–26 are concerned with the construction of two churches and a monastery. The churches were those of St. Theophano (Leo VI's own first wife) and St. Lazarus. There is some reason to think that the *encaenia* of the latter took place on May 4, 902.⁷⁶ The fall of Taormina follows (August 1, 902); and the sack of Lemnos, recorded at the end of cap. 26, is to be put at the end of the same year (902) or the beginning of the next.

At the time of the attempt on Leo VI's life in the church of St. Mocius (cap. 27), which took place on May 11, 903, the Emperor's trusty servant Samonas was busy "bringing Zoe [Carbunopsina] to the Palace to live with the Emperor" (CGM, 861/18–20). This may mark the beginning of Leo's liaison with Zoe, or else it may indicate that Zoe was being brought to the Porphyra to give birth to her first child by Leo, which was probably the princess Anna II (cf. Ohnsorge, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 51 [1958], 80–81).

Cap. 31 provides a rare instance of chronological ambiguity. It contains the curious story of the flight, arrest, confinement, and return to favor of the

⁷² The respective ministries of Stylian Zaützes and Samonas lasted about eight years each (891–899 and 900–908). If we count the former from the date at which Zaützes became magister and logothete (end of 886) rather than from the date at which he became *basileopator*, it lasted twelve and a half years. The reign of Leo was thus in popular memory divided into these two periods of supremacy, that of Zaützes and that of Samonas. A Jewish "Genizah" text of the thirteenth century, which was first published by Ginzberg and later commented on by Krauss (*Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 7 [1928–9], 66–71), illustrates this. The two ministers are called an "Ethiopian" and an "Arab." Krauss saw that the former must be Zaützes, who was probably a negro, or half-negro: see Kurtz, *op. cit.*, 11/28, τί σοί ἐστιν, Αἰθίοψ. The "Arab," Krauss thought to be Romanus Lecapenus, an identification very properly rejected by Dölger, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 31 (1931), 177. Obviously the person meant was the Arab Samonas.

⁷³ Ἑλληνικά, 14 (1956), 349–50.

⁷⁴ Grumel, 34–6.

⁷⁵ *Idem*, 32–4.

⁷⁶ C. A. Mango, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 47 (1954), 8.

Emperor's confidential minister Samonas. The last firm date before these events is that of the fall of Thessalonica, July 31, 904. Then, the minister flies, is recaptured, spends four months in confinement, and lastly returns to favor on the Emperor's Accession Day, August 30. If the point of reference of the story is the date of Samonas' flight, then this took place in April 905, i.e., after the fall of Thessalonica and before the appearance of the comet on May 16, 905 (cap. 32). But if the point of reference is August 30, then we can date the incident to 904, since August 30, 904 is a month later than July 31, 904. On the whole, if we compare the narrative of cap. 36-39, whose point of reference is its final incident, the return of Constantine Ducas from Bagdad in the winter of 907-908 (see *infra*, p. 110); and if we consider that the actual *date* given in cap. 31 is August 30, on which the annalist presumably made his entry, then we shall probably conclude that Samonas fled in April 904.⁷⁷ This was a moment of great danger for the Empire; and that Samonas, being an Arab, should have been under house-arrest during the crisis of June and July seems very understandable.

Cap. 32 is interesting. CGM, 864-5 and Theodosius Melitenus, 195/4-5 preserve the original order of events which the Logothete found in his annals. First, the comet appears (i.e., on May 16, or 23, 905);⁷⁸ second, Samonas is created a patrician; third, Constantine Porphyrogenitus is born; fourth, Constantine Porphyrogenitus is baptized (i.e., on January 6, 906). Grumel,⁷⁹ in a brilliant article, has tried to connect a later statement of the chronicle (CGM, 887/9-10), that Constantine Porphyrogenitus was married τῇ τρίτῃ τοῦ Πάσχα τῇ λεγομένη τῆς Γαλιλαίας, with the date of his birth, which, Grumel assumes, must have been at least fourteen years before his marriage, whenever that was. There can be no dispute about the *year* of Constantine's marriage: it was 919. The enigmatical "Tuesday of Easter called of Galilee" Grumel equates with the Tuesday of the fourth week after Easter, that is, May 18, 919. Now, some later versions of the Logothete's chronicle do actually connect the appearance of the comet (on May 16, 905) with Constantine's birth:⁸⁰ so, argues Grumel, Constantine Porphyrogenitus was born on May 17 or 18, 905, and married fourteen years later, to the day, on May 18, 919.

The trouble with this argument is that τῇ τρίτῃ τοῦ Πάσχα is not the correct reading: Vindobon. hist. gr. 37 has τοῦ Ἀντίπασχα⁸¹ which, for obvious reasons, is to be preferred. Constantine was therefore married, not on Tuesday, May 18, but on Tuesday May 4, 919. And, if it were really true that he was then fourteen years old or more, he must have been born on or before May 4, 905, at least twelve days, and perhaps nineteen, before the comet appeared. It could of course be argued that the two events, the birth and the comet, were so close to one another in time that they could be connected in popular memory. But, on the evidence of the text before us, there is no reason to believe that

⁷⁷ Cf. R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Flight of Samonas," *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 227.

⁷⁸ See note 65 *supra*.

⁷⁹ *Echos d'Orient*, 36 (1937), 52-64.

⁸⁰ Theoph. Cont., 370/9: οὗ ἐν τῇ γεννήσει ἐφάνη κομήτης ἀστήρ: cf. Cedrenus, II, 264/23.

⁸¹ Šestakov, *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 5, 42: τὸ (cod.) ἀντίπασχα, τῇ λεγομένη Γαλιλαίᾳ.

the Logothete or his source did connect them. It is the Continuator of Theophanes who *infers* a connection between two separate events originally divided from one another by a third, the elevation of Samonas to the rank of patrician. We are forced back to the conclusion that Constantine Porphyrogenitus may have been born at any time between May 16 and November 27, 905;⁸² and that his marriage in 919 took place *before*, rather than on or after, his fourteenth birthday.⁸³ What probably governed the choice of date for his union with the usurper's daughter was not Constantine's minority, but the prohibition of marriages during the Paschal Octave, Easter Sunday to St. Thomas' Sunday or Antipascha. On the second available day after May 2 (Antipascha), 919, the morrow of the day connected liturgically with the Wedding of Cana in Galilee, the marriage was celebrated.⁸⁴

This is disappointingly vague. As is well known, the Continuator of Theophanes states⁸⁵ that Constantine Porphyrogenitus lived fifty-five years and two months; but, as he died, according to the same authority, on November 15, third indiction (i.e., 959), A.M. 6469 (i.e., 961!), and as, even if he was born as early as May 905, he lived no more than fifty-four years and six months all told, no reliance can be placed on this information. We are equally in the dark as to the exact date of the promotion of Samonas, except that it must have been after May 16 and ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ φυγῆς, whatever that may mean. Indeed, the whole passage⁸⁶ is unsatisfactory: it is either carelessly copied or else corrupt, since, as it stands, the meaning of ἐγέννησε δὲ υἱὸν κτλ. is that Samonas, and not Leo VI, was the father of Constantine Porphyrogenitus! However, it may well be that Skylitzes⁸⁷ preserves the true record, in stating that Constantine lived "fifty-four years and two months," which would place his birth, plausibly enough, in September 905. On the whole, the most probable solution is that, first, the comet appeared on May 16 or 23; second, Samonas was made patrician "[a year] after his flight," i.e., on August 30; and third, Constantine was born in September, 905.

The building known as Kuphe (= *fornix*: CGM, 865/6-7, cap. 33) is also referred to at *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn.), 180/6. Janin's date⁸⁸ of 905 for its conversion into an almshouse could be right, since the baptism of Constantine Porphyrogenitus in January 906, referred to in the previous chapter, merely rounds off the record of his birth in (? September of) the year before. But a date between January and April 906 seems rather more probable. In either event, this move against prostitution may be regarded as an act of contrition on the Emperor's part, since he himself was living in open fornication.

⁸² Forty days before his baptism: cf. Muralt, 483.

⁸³ By Novel 109 of Leo VI, the imperial family was expressly exempted from the rule which laid down minimum ages for betrothal and marriage: see Kolias, *EEBΣ*, 23 (1953), 326-7, who quotes and comments on the text. Constantine VII could thus be married at thirteen years and eight months old, if the needs of state required it, as, in his father-in-law's view, they certainly did.

⁸⁴ See Grumel, *Echos d'Orient*, 35 (1936), 274-9. It is useful to have established that "Galilee Tuesday" was the second Tuesday after Easter: cf. *De Cerimoniis* 377/2-3.

⁸⁵ Theoph. Cont., 468/22-3: cf. *VE*, ed. by de Boor, 116-118.

⁸⁶ CGM, 865/1-2.

⁸⁷ Cedrenus, II, 338/1; cf. Muralt, 483.

⁸⁸ R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine* (Paris, 1950), 350.

The unlawful marriage of Leo VI and Zoe Carbunopsina (CGM, 865/8–9, cap. 34), which took place μετὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν (Easter Sunday, April 13, 906), was probably celebrated between April 21 and the end of the month. Nicholas Mysticus, writing in 912, states that the papal legates who came to Constantinople in February 907 arrived there eight months after the “marriage,” which would place the latter in or about June 906. But, if he is right, what was the ἑορτή of the chronicle? And in any case, if the *Vita Euthymii* is to be trusted,⁸⁹ Nicholas himself made a first attempt to reconcile his colleagues to the union as early as May 1, 906: so that the second half of April remains the likeliest time.

CGM, 865/14, cap. 35, places the promotion of Samonas to the office of *parakoimomenos* (chamberlain) before the expulsion of the Patriarch Nicholas on February 1, 907. This conflicts with the evidence of the *Vita Euthymii*,⁹⁰ which, a short time after this, still calls him *protovestiaros*. If the Logothete really found the promotion in an annal of this date, he is probably right; but no date is assigned to it in his text, and it may be his own inference. Euthymius, it is generally conceded, became patriarch (CGM, 865/21–2, cap. 35) at the end of February 907, or thereabouts.⁹¹

CGM, 866/5–11 (cap. 36) describes the sudden and severe storm which disturbed the Emperor’s visit to the monastery of Constantine Lips. As this visit was in June, only the year 907 will fit the facts. Both the return of Constantine Ducas and the coronation of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (cap. 39, 41) took place before June 908.

Then, in cap. 37–9 (CGM, 866–868), is recounted the long saga of the defection of Andronicus Ducas to Bagdad. I have elsewhere, relying on a document now attributable to Leo Choerosphactes and on a brilliant note of Professor Marius Canard, worked out the time-sequence of this chain of events.⁹² Briefly, the revolt of Andronicus, deluded by Samonas, took place late in September 905, and was followed by the naval victory of Himerius on October 6 of that year. Andronicus defected to the Saracens of Tarsus in March 906, and proceeded to Bagdad in or after October 906. The effort of the Emperor Leo to secure his return was frustrated in the winter of 906–907. But Andronicus’ son, Constantine Ducas, who had defected with him, did succeed in escaping, and got back to Constantinople in the winter of 907–908.⁹³

Now, it is clearly this last, dramatic event which is the occasion of the Logothete’s story. The story itself is a *locus classicus* for his method of “casting back.”⁹⁴ Constantine Ducas returns from Bagdad. How did he get there in the first place? Well, it all started with the naval expedition of Himerius in 905, and the malice of Samonas, and so on; and the tale unfolds. How much

⁸⁹ *VE*, 76/32: cf. de Boor, *ad loc.*, 169.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 96/18.

⁹¹ V. Grumel, *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, I, 2, p. 146: *VE*, ed. by de Boor, 124.

⁹² See notes 4 and 5 *supra*.

⁹³ See Grégoire, *Byzantion*, 8 (1933), 84; Grierson and Jenkins, *ibid.*, 32 (1962), 137–8.

⁹⁴ See *supra*, p. 92.

of it, especially of the alleged machinations of Samonas, is true, is not the question here. But the chronological sequence, at first sight violated by recording a naval victory of October 905 *after* a storm at the monastery of Lips in June 907, is none the less preserved, when it is seen that the *end* of the story, the return of Constantine Ducas from Bagdad, is the point of reference of the whole narrative.

The chronology of cap. 40-42 (CGM, 868-870) has been explained by Mr. Grierson and myself.⁹⁵ The points of reference are: the Saracen mission to Constantinople in the spring of 908; the coronation of Constantine VII on May 15, 908; and the fall of Samonas on or about June 13, 908. The previous passage (CGM, 869-870) is a "cast back" to explain this dismissal. The remaining two chapters, 43 and 44, have been explained above, p. 105, where it is shown that the Cretan expedition of Himerius set out in October 911; the Emperor Leo fell ill before or very early in March 912; the fire in the candle works occurred between March and May 912; and the Emperor died on May 11 of the same year.

ALEXANDER (CGM, 871-874):

The short reign of the Emperor Alexander (May 12, 912-June 6, 913) provides only a small amount of chronological information, though this seems to confirm, or at least not to invalidate, the principle established for the two preceding reigns.

CGM, 872/17-19, 873/8-12 (cap. 3, 5) gives two independently datable pieces of information. Cap. 3 records the fifteen-day perihelion of the comet Xiphias, known to us as Halley's Comet. Modern calculation has shown that this period began on July 19, 912,⁹⁶ and therefore lasted until August 3 of that year.

Cap. 5 records the death of the ex-Admiral Himerius. As Himerius returned to Constantinople in the latter part of May 912, and died six months later, he must have died in November 912.

The remaining items are easily placed. Cap. 1 records the recall of Nicholas Mysticus to the patriarchal see, and the subsequent condemnation, brutal punishment, and (by "cast forward") death, of Euthymius. The recall of Nicholas was the first significant act of the reign: indeed, the diocese had been in Nicholas' hands since March or April, 912, as has recently been shown by M. Oikonomidès and myself.⁹⁷ The process against Euthymius took place, as we should have supposed, in June.

Cap. 2 records the appointment of Alexander's Privy Council, which is datable to the same month: at all events, before July 19. The blasphemous adoration of the images in the Hippodrome, and the race-meeting (cap. 4), took place on a holiday between July and November. The embassy of Symeon

⁹⁵ Grierson and Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁹⁶ See M. Proctor and A. C. D. Crommelin, *Comets, Their Nature, Origin and Place in the Science of Astronomy* (London, 1937), 62.

⁹⁷ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 56 (1963), 46-52; *DOP*, 17 (1963), 399-401.

of Bulgaria (cap. 6) was repelled with insult between November and the Emperor's death in the following June, which is recorded in cap. 7.⁹⁸ Nothing in this invalidates our hypothesis, and what can be established confirms it.

We are thus, I believe, justified in thinking that the Logothete used, with much care, a set of *Annals* for his accounts of the reigns of Basil I, Leo VI and Alexander. Along with much other chronological data concerning trivialities, we have been able, on this hypothesis, to establish the dates of some more important events over which a lot of ink has been spilt in the past. The Patriarch Stephen was born in November 867. Leo VI married his first wife in the latter part of 882, but not later than November. Leo VI was imprisoned by his father for three *years* (August 883–July 886). Constantine Porphyrogenitus was born, after all, in September 905. Constantine Porphyrogenitus was married to Helen Lecapena on Tuesday, May 4, 919.

It is to be hoped that future investigation will render some of the other chronological information elucidated by this article of use to the historian.

⁹⁸ This does not conflict with what is said of the embassy by A. P. Každan, 'O natchale vtoroj bolgaro-vizantijskoj vojny', *Slavjanskij Arkhiv* (1959), 29, though he thinks the war broke out before it; see, however, MPG, CXI, cols. 45–56, *passim*.